DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 632 FL 009 223

AUTHOR Racle, Gabriel L.
TITLE Suggestopaedia and the Teaching of Languages: Key Points.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at a meeting of the Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages of Stockholm (Stockholm, Sweden)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Environment; Cognitive Processes; *Communication (Thought Transfer); Communicative Competence (Languages); Educational Environment; *Instructional Innovation; *Language Instruction; Language Programs; Language Skills; *Learning Processes; Learning Theories; Second Language Learning; Student Motivation; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS Suggestology; *Suggestopedia

ABSTRACT

Suggestology is the science which studies the interaction between man and his environment, specifically in terms of unconscious inter-relations. Suggestopedia, an approach to second language instruction, is a matter of creating learning conditions that remove the results of previous conditioning and suggestion, permitting students' reserves to be reached, their memory to be increased, and all their intellectual functions to be activated. The general principles include: (1) the creation of an agreeable suggestive atmosphere; (2) the integration of the arts into the teaching process; (3) making available a sizeable program; and (4) the direct orientation of the course toward communication. (CLK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gabriel Racle

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

ED149632

SUGGESTOPAEDIA AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGES: KEY POINTS

Gabriel Racle

For some time now, a new terminology has been appearing in Western circles interested in innovations in the field of education. It is linked essentially to two relatively mysterious key terms - suggestology and suggestopaedia. These words may sometimes even be found in the columns of mass-circulation newspapers or magazines under such promising titles as "Learning without pain"[1], "French without tears: a soft chair, a little Bach and Voilà"[2], "Apprendre une autre langue en 66 heures: la suggestopédie"[3], "La Suggestologie au Canada: une méthode qui s'exporte bien"[4], "Italienish in einem Monat"[5].

What's Suggestology

This Greco-Latin hybrid, coined in Sofia, indicates that suggestology is the science of suggestion. However, to many people the term "suggestion" has strange, often negative, connotations, due to its association with hypnosis or brainwashing.

Suggestology, is in fact the science which studies the interaction between man and his environment. Indeed, it has been established that any person, wherever he is, receives a large number of messages from his environment; these messages are, for the most part, received unconsciously, which does not mean that they do not affect the person's behaviour.

> "Our theory is base on this more or less: we subconsciously receive signals all over the world, suggestive, not rational, nor conscious. What is suggestive is that which is not conscious and rational ...[6]".

FL009223

In the broadest sense, suggestion is nothing more than a universal phenomenon of unconscious inter-relations; in this sense it exists everywhere. Advertising makes constant use of it in all its forms, both imaginable and (sometimes) unimaginable. We are also familiar with the use in medicine of "placebos" which, despite their lack of therapeutic value, do have definite curative effects. The phenomenon of suggestion then, does not have anything extraordinary or mysterious about it when looked at in this way, but it's also necessary to add something else: suggestion, as a universal phenomenon, works in two opposite directions: a positive direction leading to the full development and flowering of the personality and its capacities and a negative direction leading instead to limitation of the personality, deterioration of capacity and even destruction of it. The phenomenon is well known, at least in its direct form; encouragement, which stimulates and disapproval, which crushes. With this we are dealing with the idea of direct suggestion, on the first level, verbalized and with linguistic structure.

There is also suggestion on another plane: the unconscious. Many impressions are received at a marginal level of perception, beyond the realm of conscious attention and into the realm of emotions, subjective reactions etc. Everything that goes on at this second level has a positive or negative suggestive action. We can say to some one "Don't worry; what you have to do is really easy" in an attempt to motivate him positively toward a task. But the attitude of the person saying this, the intonation he uses, the expression on his face, may all suggest the opposite; this negative suggestion, perceived more or less consciously, will have a negative repercussion. As well, the sentence itself may have a negative effect if experience has taught this person that, every time some one says something is easy, it is because the task is really difficult. There is therefore an unconscious association of "easy" and "difficult".

We are therefore reacting not only to the specific semantic content of a statement, but also to all the non-specific stimuli that go with it, before, during or after. These non-specific mental reactions are particularly numerous in the artistic field.

Music, rhythms, harmony of sound, form or colour, etc., act directly on our unconscious and provoke reactions, evoke feelings, create desires, much more directly than would a rational, logical and conscious process: "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast" said Congreve, and not without ground. The fine arts are therefore a favoured field for suggestions reaching our unconscious both rapidly and effectively, if suggestion is a normal phenomenon existing in all relationships between individuals, it is clear that there is a social suggestion phenomenon; and this phenomenon is so powerful that it, in fact, determines an actual suggestive social norm as far as the human being and his reactions are concerned. Determines it so well, in fact, that a standard is established in some way and those deviating from this standard are considered somewhat abnormal.

Our society imposes a large number of limitations resulting (among other things) from routine, fear of novelty, incompetence, charlatanism, school atmosphere (insistence on effort, accent on difficulties, parcelling of subject matter, extension of programs, etc.). Finally, ignorance of our own real capacities (physiological and intellectual) is another limiting factor. The first task of suggestology and suggestopaedia will therefore be to remove peoples' prior conditioning, to find the way to escape the social norm and open the way to development of the personality. This is perhaps the greatest problem suggestology is confronted with, since the person must be "convinced" that his potential capacity is far above what he thinks it is. But it is important to know that the individual protects himself with psychological barriers, just as the organism protects itself with physiological barriers. This then, gives some idea of the basic principles which all suggestopaedic teaching must take into account.

Suggestopaedia

In suggestopaedia, it is a matter of creating learning conditions that remove the results of previous conditioning and suggestion permitting the student's reserves to be reached, his memory to be increased and his intellectual functions all to be activated.

Suggestopaedia, we must hasten to add, is a paedogogical science concerning the entire individual, developing all his capacities, all his creativity, and is based on a total approach. It is a system that is as scientific as possible and integrates the basic principles of paedogogy with the principles of suggestology. We obtain these results by taking into account the general principles set out above, which in practice appear as:

Creation of an agreeable suggestive atmosphere: physically agreeable because the study room is more like a living room than a class room, which takes away some of the academic flavour and encourages an ambiance of contact, inter-relationship and exchange instead of a "college" feeling; psychologically agreeable too, in what goes on there, the behaviour of the teacher, the attention given to every student by the teacher. It is important to create a growing state of confidence in the student. This confidence brings about a state of peace, calm and tranquility which aids in breaking down the anti-suggestive barriers and increases receptiveness. The more confidence there is, the more enjoyment there is in learning. Results increase also, thus increasing the confidence in the method, in the teacher etc.

Integration of the arts into the teaching process: this must be understood in the broad sense of the term. The arts have the greatest suggestive influence, and for Dr. Lozanov ART is one of the very bases of his method. The arts create, indeed, a specific environment of an emotional nature which stimulates individual capacities and increases receptiveness. "The fine arts are the highest form of suggestion". but, says Dr. Lozanov, "we are trying to apply the same process to more ordinary arts". This means that the teacher and the students participate in the creation of an artistic activity. There is not simply artistic passivity (or rather pseudo-passivity) in the use of artistic elements (such as music for example); there is also an active artistic creation that is an expression of the individuals and the group.

A sizeable program mobilizing the reserves of the student and giving him positive suggestions: the program is sizeable because we know the student has sufficient potential reserves to assimilate it.

The program is therefore always pretty substantial, the first lesson has close to 200 new words in it and over the ten first lessons given over a total of 66 hours this means a presentation of more than 1,800 units. This is very important in the dialectic of desuggestion - suggestion because in such a program we do away with the student's habitual standard (or de-suggest him) by suggesting new possibilities.

Finally, and most important, the direct orientation of the course toward communication : language is above all an instrument of communication and holds an essential place in human relations. But it is of course obvious that anyone who goes about learning another language comes to it with fears, either conscious or unconscious, from which he must first be liberated. The barrier must be lifted; a rigid attitude at the beginning of a course would only reinforce it. By placing the student from the very beginning in a communication situation we are not only placing him in a normal human situation but are also associating language and situation from within. This results in reinforcement of learning and creation of automatisms. When the student realizes he is capable of speaking in this or that situation his confidence in himself and in the method increases, which increases his capacity to learn and so on.

The student's aim then becomes acquisition of the ability to communicate; the language learned is only a means to this end.

This is greatly different from the method used in most current language training where the point of departure is most often a linguistic one and one attacks a situation only via a quite complex system of transpositions. The risk in such cases is that the whole situation will remain artificial and not "felt" by the student.

Conclusion

It is important to stress the comprehensiveness necessary for the suggestopaedic process; all the elements of which it is composed, all the factors, that are taken into consideration, are closely interconnected in one unified, positive, suggestive perspective.

Thus, it is necessary to reinforce the positive second-level orientations: the structure of the courses and the behaviour of the teacher complement one another, as do the organization of the content and the range of suggestive methods.

> " The principles and the means of suggestopaedia are inseparably linked. They should not alternate but should be realized simultaneously in every moment of the process of instruction." [7]

The comprehensiveness of the suggestopaedic approach explains both its results and its effects. We are obviously only at the beginning of a promising program. With further knowledge and in-depth study of suggestological theories, a greater number of more varied experiments and better dissemination of information, the beneficial effects and humanistic consequences of a suggestopaedic education will increase.

NOTES

1. Globe and Mail, March 9, 1971.

2. Maclean's, October 1975.

3. Le Droit, July 15, 1976.

4. Psychologie, June 1976.

5. Kurier, December 3, 1976.

6. G. Lozanov, Round Table, in *A Teaching Experience with the Suggestopaedic Method*, Ottawa, 1975, p. 292.

7. G. Lozanov, *The nature and history of the suggestopaedic system of teaching foreign languages and its experimental projects*, Suggestology and Suggestopaedia, 1975,1, p. 9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following textes give a fairly good idea of what suggestopaedia is all about and thus provide basic documentation easily available in English.

Lozanov, C., *The Suggestological Theory of Communication and Instruction.* Suggestology and Suggestopaedia, 1975, 1,3.

Lozanov, G., *The Nature and History of the Suggestopaedic System of Teaching Foreign Languages and its Experiemental Prospects.* Suggestology and Suggestopaedia, 1975, 1, 1.

Lozanov, G., *Foundations of Suggestology.* In: Problemi na Suggestologiyata, Sofia, 1973.

Lozanov, G., *A General Theory of Suggestion in the Communications Process and the Activation of the Total Reserves of the Learner's Personality.* Suggestopaedia-Canada, 1977, 1.

Racle, G., *Introduction to Suggestopaedia.* In: A Teaching Experience with the Suggestopaedic Method, Ottawa, C.F.P. 1975.

Racle, G., *A Suggestopaedic Language Course,* Id.

Racle, G., *Teachers and Suggestopaedic Language Teaching,* Id.

Racle, G., *The Linguistic Approach in the Suggestopaedic Teaching of Languages,* Id.

Racle, G., *A New Development in Education,* Training 77, 1977, March.

Szentgyörgyvari, A., *Technemes in a Suggestive Pedagogy.* Id.

Walsh, D., *The Effectiveness of Suggestopaedia in Second Language Competence and Performance,* Id.

Round Table: Suggestology and Suggestopaedia. G. Lozanov, O.W. Markley, E. Philipov, G. Racle, A. Szentgyörgyvari. Id.

A Teaching Experience with the Suggestopaedic Method can be obtained from: Publishing Centre, Mail Order Service, Department of Supply and Services, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0S9. Canada.

Les textes suivants existent en français

Lozanov, G., *Théorie générale du suggestif dans l'acte de communication et activation des réserves globales de la personnalité de l'apprenant.* Suggestopédie-Canada, 1977-1.

Racle, G., *Introduction à la suggestopédie.* Dans: Une expérience d'enseignement avec la méthode suggestopédique, Ottawa, C.F.P. 1975.

Racle, G., *Un Cours suggestopédique de Langue.* Id.

Racle, G., *Professeur et enseignement suggestopédique,* Id.

Racle, G., *La démarche langagière dans l'enseignement suggestopédique des langues,* Id.

Racle, G., *Du nouveau en éducation,* Formation 77, 1977, mars.

Saféris, F., *Une langue étrangère assimilée en un mois. Les promesses de la suggestopédie.* Psychologie, 1976, juin.

Szentgyörgyvari, A., *Les technèmes en pédagogie suggestive.* Dans: Une expérience d'enseignement avec la méthode suggestopédie, Ottawa, C.F.P. 1975.

Walsh, D., *Rapport sur l'efficacité de la suggestopédie.* Id.

Table Ronde consacrée à la suggestologie et à la suggestopédie avec: G. Lozanov, O.W. Markley, E. Philipov, G. Racle, A. Szentgyörgyvari. Id.

On peut se procurer l'ouvrage: Une expérience d'enseignement avec la méthode suggestopédique, auprès de: Centre d'éditions, Services des commandes postales, Approvisionnements et Services Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0S9 CANADA